Bloodied, Torn, and Somewhat Hopeful

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by TheyArePackHunters

Summary

A slightly-drugged immediately post-fall Will is trying to make Reasonable, Well-Considered Decisions and just Will Grahaming his way through everything anyway.
Hannibal is Hannibal (thrilled, amused, and more than somewhat vulnerable where Will is concerned).
This is kind of a prequel to my Feyest Will series.

Notes

A giant thank you to wellntruly (canton on ao3) for the series name, which is entirely her creation. When outlining the ridiculously long series this will eventually belong to I found myself writing "Feyest Will!!" all over the place until eventually I realized she would have to be given credit somewhere.

See the end of the work for more notes

The first thing to peel away is the blood. Next go the scattered medical supplies, the dishes drying beside the sink. The books return to their shelves.

Outside the door Will fumbles with the lock and a short metal pick.

“I have been awake for too long, while he has slept.”

The lock clicks and the door swings open. Will turns to the figure slumped against the wall.

“I lift him, despite my injuries, carry him as I have before.” Will grunts beneath the weight, staggering slightly as he crosses the threshold. “Stitches reopen.”

He drops the body on the bed, half collapsing on top of him.

“They were poorly done anyway.”

Reluctantly he forces himself to sit up, glancing around the room. One hand clutches almost automatically at his gut, applying firm pressure he knows will hardly make a difference. “I am not strong enough to tend to both of us.”

Will looks up as Chiyoh walks in, rifle not quite poking into the back of the doctor she is escorting.

“You should have left him in the car,” she says.

Something flares inside him, scorching and powerful despite his exhaustion. Will looks down at his own body, spread across the bed. “No. He stays with me.” He reaches down to brush aside dark curls. “That is my design.”

And Will was back in the bed, eyes still closed, unwilling to open them and admit that that was as far as his empathy would take him. It hardly seemed right. He was never more effective than with Hannibal in his head; he should be damn near preternatural by now.

Still, Will acknowledged defeat with a sigh, opening his eyes with no more idea how long Hannibal had been gone or when he’d be back than he'd had when he began. He could feel a headache building at the base of his skull, courtesy of the acrid smelling disinfectant heavy on the air and the anesthesia keeping the worst of the pain at bay. Though, after a glance at his bare chest he had to admit he could understand the necessity, and what's more, if he remembered the fall with any accuracy, then his front must be his good side. In fact, if he was remembering correctly, it would be very much in his best interest to just lie still and hope not to jar the patchwork quilt that frightened doctor had undoubtedly made of his tattered back.

But if he stuck to what was in his best interest he wouldn’t be here in the first place.

When he pulled himself up on his elbows his vision went black, but he held himself still until the world returned. As soon as he could tell which direction the edge of the bed was, he sat up the rest of the way and swung his legs over. Nausea spiked; the room spun, snapped to black, and finally returned a blurry smear.

This was all much worse than it should be.

Hannibal had been drugging him, far beyond the necessary anesthetics. Again.

He waited for the anger, but found the most he could manage was a mildly indignant annoyance. The lack was alarming enough to force him to his feet.

...where he stayed for some embarrassingly small fraction of a second before crumpling to the floor, legs entirely unwilling to obey instruction. For a moment he just lay there, allowing himself to think of all the decisions that had led him to this moment, lying face down in a seedy motel room beside a rather large bloodstain still wet enough to smell like iron. Ridiculously, inexplicably, he felt the urge to lean just an inch closer and lick it. Of course, he didn't, but the fact of the urge made him growl, low in his throat, at the man responsible. *Well, the other man responsible*, a voice in his head reminded him. He wondered when his conscience started defending Hannibal Lecter. The voice's ready rejoinder was not a comforting one.

Although he really had only meant to linger a moment or two, his body must have had other ideas because some time later he pushed his way back into bleary consciousness, unsure if the sound of voices outside had woken him or if it was the throbbing in his head. Either the drugs were still thick in his system or he was far worse off than he realized, and this was just how the world felt now. *Which form of vulnerability would you prefer?* He pushed the question aside. Not that he was afraid of Hannibal hurting him in his sleep—that would have come if it was going to. But Hannibal might make decisions in Will's muddied state, and that was hardly ever a good thing.

Never a good thing, he told himself sternly.

He wondered what happened to the doctor.

Do you have to wonder? Bedelia's voice had sounded almost neutral when she asked the question in life, but in his head it rang bitter and amused.

He growled into the floor again, the movement pulling at the stitches in his cheek, the sound dying just as the door swung open.

He heard a sharp intake of breath, and then Hannibal was at his side. He lifted Will, ignored Will's bit-back groan at the pain tearing through his back. *Lucky you fell on your face.* He couldn't remember hitting the water. Instead he could remember the waves throwing him against the rocks, Hannibal clutching at him. He could remember thinking for a moment Hannibal was trying to drown them. Realizing Hannibal was unconscious. Turning to cling to the rock face, inching along as waves battered at his bloodied back, the arm gripping Hannibal on fire with strain and then with cold, the world narrowing and finally vanishing, leaving only the feel of rock beneath his hands as he pulled forward, no longer remembering why or to where, until the waves shrank, water lapping at his knees, the weight of both their bodies suddenly unbearable—and then even sensation had left him.

Hannibal lifted Will into a too-soft bed, brows knit.

“You’ve been drugging me.” Will's voice came out gravely.

“Yes.”

Will opened his mouth to explain that that was going to stop. “You shouldn’t pick me up. You’ll pop your stitches.”

Hannibal chuckled, an endearing, entirely charmed sound. Will wanted to strangle him. Instead he pulled himself up so that his shoulders rested against the headboard, mostly just to keep Hannibal from looming quite so much.

“When’s Chiyoh coming back?”

If Hannibal was surprised that Will knew about her involvement, he didn’t show it. “She’s arranging our travel.”

“*Our* travel?”

“Of course. Her efforts will take us as far as Argentina, but after that we could go wherever you would like.”

Will’s eyebrows were hitting the edge of his hairline. “Argentina?”

“Do you have any particular objection to Argentina?” Hannibal sounded genuinely surprised, but Will could see the glint in his eye, the near-undetectable lift around the corners of his mouth.

“No, not any *particular* objection.”

Hannibal practically glowed. “Excellent. Would you mind turning over then? I would like to check your stitches.”

Will bit back a curse at the pain that shot through his back as he did as he was told. He waited throughout Hannibal’s tsking inspection for arguments to bubble forth, but it was almost as though there were simply too many to start. They were all jostling for position at the back of his throat, and no single one could get through. So he was silent as Hannibal removed his bandages and redid a few sets of stitches before smearing on a local anesthetic and rebandaging him. Will noted he didn’t apply the anesthetic until the last moment, when he no longer had any excuse to be touching Will.

Will decided to let that go, for the moment.

Will felt himself tense at the thought, his body drawing taught, suddenly a live-wire as he stared at the qualifying phrase hanging in his head, at its implication of further moments, of an indefinite number of moments including the need for such a discussion, a discussion he wouldn’t be in any sort of state to have for days, maybe weeks down the line. At which point he, apparently, still planned to be here, with Hannibal, carefully choosing words about touching and drugs and boundaries.

Hannibal felt him twitch as he dabbed on the last of the anesthetic, but said nothing. Apparently there was a lot of that going around.

“When do we leave?” Will asked, voice muffled somewhat by the pillows.

He didn’t have to see Hannibal to sense the sudden stillness that came over him, and was somewhat mollified. So not so self-assured then. When Hannibal finally did speak his voice was somewhat rougher than normal. “Soon.” He stood abruptly, leaving a cold spot where his body’s heat had been pressing up against Will’s side. Will heard the sound of him opening a fresh pack of bandages, undoubtedly to redress his own wounds. Check for any signs of infection or tearing around the stitches.

A gut wound could be tricky like that, especially if you were left to manage it on your own.

Will pushed that thought down with firm finality. He was not going to play doctor for the cannibalistic serial killer he’d tried to kill no more than a day or two ago.

“Whose stitches were you correcting just now?” Will asked instead.

“Doctor Benton, I believe.”

“Chiyoh found him?”

Hannibal hummed affirmation.

“And you killed him?”

“She was busy making the travel arrangements.”

“Dealing with the corpse has less of an exposure risk.”

It wasn't a question, but Will still turned his head to see Hannibal nod. He had removed his shirt. The gut wound looked ugly, though not nearly as ugly as Will’s had when it was fresh. “Although trustworthy and well-paid, her contacts are still more likely to recognize me than the esteemed doctor is.”

“Right.” Will shifted his shoulders, feeling the alien pull of numb skin. Hannibal had applied too much anesthetic. *He covered your fresh stitches, not an inch more,* piped up the annoyingly pro-Hannibal voice inside his head. Though perhaps the truly annoying thing was that that voice would switch to anti-Hannibal the second he started listening to it. “Next time skip the anesthetic,” he said, his tone more acidic than he’d meant.

Hannibal paused for a moment in his careful rewrapping of his own bandage before nodding sharply. “Of course.”

“And don’t drug me without asking.”

“I only meant to limit your pain, but yes, I will refrain for the remainder of your recovery.”

“No, Hannibal, not 'for the remainder of my recovery.' Never again. I'm not your cattle, to be drugged for maximum docility.”

Hannibal taped down the end of the bandage and set aside the remaining gauze before meeting Will’s gaze. Will wondered, not for the first time, how he could manage to look so hurt at the implication that he might continue to do something he had already done.

“You have my word, Will.”

“Good,” Will said, as gruff as he could manage, hoping to break the sudden charge in the room. He was not having this conversation. He’d given himself leave to put it off for days, even weeks. And considering he didn’t give himself leave for a whole hell of a lot, he figured he must really need this.

He was grateful when Hannibal took the hint and got up to fix them something in the kitchenette.

Soon Will could hear him grumbling under his breath about a lack of decent knives and the criminality of canned vegetables, and something in it felt normal enough or familiar enough that Will was able to let some of the tension fade out of his beaten body. After a long, suspended moment feeling his thoughts settle against the thrum of his aching cheek and shoulder, his mind slipped away and he finally slept, for some reason confident that Hannibal wouldn’t do anything too horrible before he woke.

End Notes

I was actually trying to write a fic set about a year or two in the future, but somehow this happened instead. I plan to pick up again after that time jump, but who knows, maybe I'll just write straight through until I hit the actual plot I outlined when this started.

I have never written fanfiction before, and even though I was (am) pretty terrified to write in such a ridiculously talented fandom, this was super fun and I think I'm going to make a habit of it.

Oh, and this was (in a roundabout sort of way) in response MrsSaxon's color palette challenge (since the series is in response to that). So, although this isn't entirely relevant to this single ficlet, the colors are Alizarin Crimson, Phthalo Green, and Black (the black you get when you mix Alizarin Crimson and Phthalo Green, aka my favorite black and the black I would say you should use to paint blood in the moonlight, in case anyone was wondering where I’m going with this).

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